



Statement by the Bangladesh Delegation under Agenda Item 108: Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism at the Sixth Committee of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly, 04 October 2016, Trusteeship Council Chamber

Mr. President/ Distinguished delegates,

The year 2016 has witnessed the global spread of terrorism and violent extremism on an unprecedented scale. Vicious terrorist attacks around the world have exposed the lurking threats in our midst and the growing ideological networks of dominant international terrorist groups. They have also perhaps exposed the divergences in international community's understanding and response to terrorism and violent extremism that terrorists have been quick to take advantage of.

Against this backdrop, the Fifth Review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy earlier this year has witnessed the adoption of a General Assembly Resolution by consensus. The Resolution has reaffirmed Member States' resolve to project a united front in promoting the comprehensive and balanced implementation of all four pillars of the Strategy. It has also given a positive nod to the Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism as a possible template for national and regional level replication.

Bangladesh underscores the importance of the UN's strategic leadership in addressing the generational challenges of terrorism and violent extremism. In order to further streamline and coordinate the UN's response to these global threats, it is critical that the current Secretary General and his successor invest considerable thoughts into recommending a meaningful review of the organisation's counter-terrorism architecture. It would be incumbent upon Member States to constructively engage with this review so as not to turn it into yet another missed opportunity.

In Bangladesh, our counter-terrorism efforts are guided by the global norms and standards set by the UN, while we try to calibrate practical measures on the ground in response to the local specificities. This has led to significant change, over the last seven years, in our Government's counter-terrorism response at policy, legal and institutional levels, in line with its avowed 'zero tolerance' approach.

Bangladesh is a State Party to most international counter-terrorism instruments, and has instituted a national mechanism for promoting compliance with the relevant Security Council Resolutions. The Government has made it clear that our territory would not be allowed to be

used by any regional operatives to cause or incite harm against our neighbouring countries. It has also been a decisive and principled stand taken to arrest and prevent the potential flow of foreign terrorist fighters, both outbound and inbound. Bangladesh remains vocal on strengthening international cooperation on multi-modal transport security, seeking access for resource-constrained settings to cost-effective screening and detection technologies.

Our comprehensive and coordinated measures to combat financing of terrorism and money laundering have been duly recognized by the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF), as we take on board its recommendations for further improvements in implementation. We have been partnering with the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Taskforce (CTITF) in order to gain better understanding of asset freezing and prosecution relating to counter-terrorism cases. We have been open to discussions concerning possible nexus at the regional level between arms proliferation and other trans-national organized crimes on one hand and terrorism and violent extremism on the other.

In the backdrop of our tangible gains in containing the local terrorist groups, there has been the rise of some international terrorist entities that managed to create appeal for certain new demographics in our society. The unprecedented, gruesome attacks in a restaurant in Dhaka on 01 July brought home to us the reality of some so-called educated young people being pulled into the terrorist dragnets, motivated by the twisted violent extremist narratives premised on religion. This rather new wave of terrorist threats has once again exposed the involvement and influence of some of our diaspora members radicalized in their countries of residence. Their provenance has made it easier for some of these entities to make unsubstantiated claims of their association with the high-profile international terrorist networks, and thus draw misplaced attention to their agenda.

In most cases, the new band of terrorists has been able to construct their narratives based on a number of internal and external issues to galvanise support for their cause. They continue to promote a religious extremist agenda which they claim to be an antidote to the democratic, pluralist and secular principles upheld by our Constitution and State organs. They manage to tap into a sustained sense of grievances by referring to the ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises in large tracts of the Muslim world and palpable trends of Islamophobia and xenophobia in parts of the world. It is perhaps narratives like these that should explain the recruitment of some of our young women among the ranks of the rebranded terrorist groups.

Our Government maintains the unequivocal stand that a terrorist is a terrorist and does not deserve to be identified by any belief, caste or creed. As our Hon'ble Prime Minister has reiterated in her address to the General Assembly recently, the Government and people of Bangladesh are determined to combat and eliminate these new terrorist threats in our midst, in a comprehensive manner and with due diligence. While our law enforcement authorities have already identified a number of masterminds, financiers and foot soldiers, and dealt with them under the purview of law, efforts are ongoing to unearth the location of the remaining operatives and bring them to justice.

In parallel with law and order measures, our Government has called for a 'whole-of-society' response to root out the evils of violent extremism. At the directives from the highest political level, multi-stakeholder platforms have been made operational at the grassroots to build awareness and safeguards against violent extremism. Emphasis is being given on building community resilience and engagement, including through enhanced participation in community policing and women and youth-led initiatives. The Government is actively considering developing a National Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism. Further capacity building of the judiciary, intelligence, investigation and prosecution authorities, including focus on human rights training, remains a priority.

We appreciate the readiness flagged by the UN and other international partners to support Bangladesh's renewed counter-terrorism efforts. We urge the international community's understanding in refraining from hastily labeling any terrorist threats or entities to help avoid misperceptions about the situation on the ground. Our Government has decided in principle to run any offer of international cooperation and assistance through an existing public-private platform for aligning them to local needs and challenges.

In broad terms, we reiterate our request for the international community's support in the following areas:

First, we wish to see definite progress in the work on developing a Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism drawing on the potentially emerging convergence on the underlying causes of international terrorism and violent extremism.

Second, it is imperative that commitment to global counter-terrorism efforts be translated into unqualified withdrawal and rejection of support for the masterminds, financiers, abettors and sympathisers of terrorist and violent extremist acts, irrespective of their denomination or affiliation. Seamless flow of information and intelligence among national jurisdictions remains most critical.

Third, there must be demonstrable efforts to find lasting solutions to illegal foreign occupation, colonization and protracted conflicts to plug a recurrent source of grievance among certain groups of people, including young impressionable minds, that terrorist tend to exploit to their advantage.

Fourth, the need for shared understanding and cooperation among the concerned actors, including the private sector, is a must in the interest of strategic communication to defeat terrorist narratives and ideologies. It merits due understanding that challenges pertaining to countries in transition or in the process of modernizing would be essentially different from those in much more mature settings.

Fifth and lastly, it would perhaps be timely to consider a Global Compact to harness the resources and agency of youth around the world to prevent and counter violent extremism. In

doing so, it would be important to create for them equitable opportunities to realize their transformative potentials as global citizens in a sustainable future.

To conclude, Bangladesh wishes to reaffirm its abiding commitment to remain a staunch and reliable partner of the international community to eliminate the scourges of terrorism and violent extremism.

I thank you.